

**MEDIA RELEASE: Attention Political and Health Reporters****Some Canadians with chronic health conditions need more help to help themselves**

**Toronto Jan. 27, 2010** – Many Canadians with chronic health conditions don't regularly receive some of the expected types of support that could help them better manage their own health, according to the latest Canadian Health Care Matters bulletin from the Health Council of Canada.

The bulletin - *Helping Patients Help Themselves: Are Canadians with chronic conditions getting the support they need to manage their health?* - is based on the 2008 Canadian Survey of Experiences with Primary Health Care, which measured the quality of health care as reported by Canadian patients, including those with seven common chronic conditions.

"Self-management is recognized as a crucial aspect of primary health care, and has been shown to reduce emergency room visits and hospital admissions," said John G. Abbott, CEO of the Health Council of Canada. "Patients – particularly those with chronic conditions – need support to develop the knowledge and skills to manage their health care and become partners in their own health."

Overall, though, self-management support is too often non-existent. According to the bulletin:

- At best, about half to two thirds of Canadians with a chronic condition were asked to talk about their goals in caring for their chronic disease with their health care provider.
- About one-quarter were referred to a specific support group to help them cope or encouraged to attend a community program such as an exercise class.
- Again, only about one-quarter to one-third received a written list of things they could do to improve their health.

Along with the bulletin, the Health Council of Canada is asking Canadians to share their experiences with chronic conditions and the role self-management plays in their treatment and care.

To download the bulletin or to participate in the discussion, visit [www.healthcouncilcanada.ca](http://www.healthcouncilcanada.ca).

**Background**

The Health Council of Canada, created by the 2003 *First Ministers' Accord on Health Care Renewal* is mandated to monitor and report on the progress of health care renewal in Canada. Councillors were appointed by the participating provinces, territories and the Government of Canada.

For more information on the Health Council of Canada or to view past reports, visit [www.healthcouncilcanada.ca](http://www.healthcouncilcanada.ca).

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